

LISTING OF THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently Amended) A multimedia distribution network comprising a plurality of set-top-boxes (STBs) adapted to request a multimedia channel, the network comprising:

a content server;

a distribution unit, wherein the distribution unit is adapted to independently transmit on-demand a requested multimedia channel and an associated requested corresponding bandwidth to each of the plurality of STBs, wherein the associated requested corresponding bandwidth is requested from each of the plurality of STBs; and

a use meter, the use meter is adapted to monitor channel requests and evaluate information associated with the channel requests to determine viewing habits and subscriber interests of viewers for each of the plurality of STBs.

2. (Original) The network according to claim 1, wherein the content server is adapted to receive and manage a plurality of multimedia transmissions from at least one satellite receiver, the plurality of multimedia transmissions each comprising a plurality of multimedia channels.

3. (Canceled)

4. (Original) The network according to claim 1, wherein each of the plurality of end-user STBs is adapted to independently request a multimedia channel, wherein the distribution unit is adapted to acquire each requested multimedia channel from the content server and independently transmit each requested multimedia channel respectively to each requesting STB on-demand.

5. (Original) The network according to claim 1, further comprising a use memory, the use memory is adapted to store monitored channel request information corresponding to each of the plurality of STBs for evaluation, the use memory is also adapted to record a length of viewing time corresponding to each channel request,

wherein the use memory is also adapted to record the bandwidth consumed corresponding to each respective channel request.

6. (Original) The network according to claim 1, further comprising a use memory, wherein the use meter is adapted to create and populate a plurality of user logs in the use memory, the user logs are adapted to store monitored channel request information, bandwidth consumed for each corresponding channel request, and length of viewing time of multimedia channel information for each of the plurality of STBs.

7. (Original) The network according to claim 6, wherein the user logs comprise at least one of a channel identification number, a channel viewing beginning time, a channel viewing ending time, bandwidth consumed corresponding to a requested channel, a viewed program identification number, a likely viewer identification number, failed channel requests, additional programs viewed on a displayed channel when the displayed channel is displayed for longer than a single initial program length, advertisers displaying advertisements during viewed programs, subject matter associated with the viewed programs, product placement in the viewed programs, and targeted marketing information associated with the viewed programs and advertisements.

8. (Original) The network according to claim 1, wherein the distribution unit is adapted to communicate with each of the plurality of STBs via one of a wire or wirelessly, the distribution unit comprises a plurality of transmission heads, each of the transmission heads comprising at least one of mechanical, electrical, and electronic switches and relays adapted to maintain continuous communication with each of the STBs at a plurality of end-user locations.

9. (Original) The network according to claim 1, wherein the distribution unit is adapted to communicate with each of the plurality of STBs via one of a wireless receiver, a wired receiver, an optical receiver, a wireless transmitter, an optical transmitter, and a wired transmitter.

10. (Original) The network according to claim 1, further comprising a subscriber database memory storing subscriber information for each of a plurality of end-user subscribers, the subscriber database memory comprising at least one of a listing of channels subscribed, STB identification information, subscriber spending limits, subscriber modifiable information, and subscriber identity information for authentication.

11. (Original) The network according to claim 1, wherein each STB is adapted to permit a subscriber end-user to unsubscribe to subscribed programming channels by selecting a corresponding response from an interactive menu displayed by the STB on an end-user display apparatus, wherein the selected response is transmitted to a network component for processing.

12. (Original) The network according to claim 1, wherein each STB is adapted to permit a subscriber end-user to view information stored in a subscriber memory database corresponding to the subscriber end-user, and the STB is adapted to permit the subscriber end-user to view at least one of end-user preferences, subscription status, collected statistics, and viewing habits on an end-user display apparatus on-demand, wherein the information is transmitted to the STB from a network component.

13. (Original) The network according to claim 1, wherein multimedia information is communicated to the STB via one of a cable, an optical fiber, and wirelessly.

14. (Original) The network according to claim 1, wherein the STB is adapted to detect whether an end-user display apparatus is one of active and inactive, the STB is also adapted to transmit a message to the network, the message indicating whether the display apparatus is one of active and inactive, wherein multimedia transmission is terminated when the display apparatus is determined to be inactive.

15. (Original) The network according to claim 14, wherein detecting whether the end-user display apparatus is one of active and inactive comprises evaluating at least one component of the end-user display apparatus by the STB.

16. (Original) The network according to claim 1, wherein the STB is adapted to determine whether an end-user is physically viewing transmitted multimedia information, wherein upon determining that the end-user is not physically viewing the transmitted multimedia information, the STB transmits a message to the network indicating that the end-user is not physically viewing the multimedia information, wherein transmission of multimedia information is terminated.

17. (Original) The network according to claim 16, wherein determining whether an end-user is physically viewing the transmitted multimedia information comprises prompting the end-user to interact with the STB.

18. (Original) The network according to claim 1, wherein a subscriber database stores previous subscriber information and settings for subscribers not currently subscribed to a multimedia information package offered by the network.

19. (Original) The network according to claim 1, wherein a subscriber database stores user preferences for value added services, wherein the service levels are selected from at least one of gold, silver, and bronze service levels, and wherein the service levels are used to determine an amount of advertisements to be displayed on a subscriber end-user display apparatus.

20. (Original) The network according to claim 1, wherein the content server is adapted to select and transmit advertisements targeted based upon a user profile stored in the subscriber database, wherein targeted advertisements comprise advertisements corresponding to at least one of a subscriber personal information, a subscriber employment information, a subscriber channel viewing habits, and determined subscriber interests.

21. (Original) The network according to claim 1, wherein the content server is adapted to transmit a message to the STB informing an end-user that a selected channel is unavailable for access due to one of unavailability of a requested channel from a satellite and unavailability of the requested channel due to the requested channel being restricted channel to select end-users.

22. (Currently Amended) A set-top-box (STB) adapted to request a multimedia channel from a multimedia distribution network, the STB comprising:

a processor for processing and independently managing channel requests, bandwidth requests, and multimedia channel information;

an audio decoder for decoding audio information received via an encoded multimedia channel transmission;

a video decoder for decoding video information received via an encoded multimedia channel transmission;

a data decoder for decoding data from one of the network and the Internet;

a transmitter for transmitting channel requests and corresponding bandwidth requests from the STB to the multimedia distribution network; and

a receiver for receiving multimedia channel information and messages associated with the channel requests.

23. (Original) The STB according to claim 22, further comprising an antenna for wirelessly communicating with a multimedia distribution unit in the multimedia distribution network.

24. (Original) The STB according to claim 22, further comprising a wired connection for communicating with a multimedia distribution unit in the multimedia distribution network.

25. (Original) The STB according to claim 22, further comprising a combination audio/video decoder unit, the combination audio/video decoder unit comprising the audio decoder and the video decoder.

26. (Original) The STB according to claim 22, further comprising a combination transmitter/receiver unit, the combination transmitter/receiver unit comprising the transmitter and the receiver.

27. (Original) The STB according to claim 22, wherein the STB is adapted to permit a subscriber end-user to unsubscribe to subscribed programming channels by selecting a corresponding response from an interactive menu displayed by the STB on an end-user display apparatus, wherein the STB transmits the corresponding response to a network component for processing.

28. (Original) The STB according to claim 22, wherein the STB is adapted to permit a subscriber end-user to access and view information stored in a subscriber memory database corresponding to the subscriber end-user and the end-user STB, and the STB is adapted to permit the subscriber end-user to view at least one of end-user preferences, subscription status, collected statistics, and viewing habits on a display apparatus on-demand, wherein the information is received by the STB from a network component.

29. (Original) The STB according to claim 22, wherein the multimedia information provider communicates to the STB via one of a cable, an optical fiber, and wirelessly.

30. (Original) The STB according to claim 22, wherein the STB is adapted to detect whether an end-user display apparatus is one of active and inactive, the STB is adapted to transmit a message to the network, the message indicating whether the display apparatus is one of active and inactive, wherein multimedia distribution is terminated when the display apparatus is determined to be inactive.

31. (Original) The STB according to claim 22, wherein detecting whether the end-user display apparatus is one of active and inactive comprises evaluating at least one component of the end-user display apparatus.

32. (Original) The STB according to claim 22, wherein the STB is adapted to determine whether an end-user is physically viewing transmitted multimedia information, wherein upon determining that the end-user is not physically viewing the transmitted multimedia information, the STB transmits a message to the network indicating that the end-user is not physically viewing the multimedia information, wherein transmission of multimedia information is terminated.

33. (Original) The STB according to claim 32, wherein determining whether an end-user is physically viewing the transmitted multimedia information comprises prompting the end-user to interact with the STB.

34. (Original) The STB according to claim 22, wherein a subscriber database stores previous subscriber information and settings for subscribers not currently subscribed to a multimedia information package offered by the network.

35. (Original) The STB according to claim 22, wherein a subscriber database stores user preferences for value added services, wherein the service levels are selected from at least one of gold, silver, and bronze service levels, and wherein the service levels are used to determine an amount of advertisements to be displayed on a subscriber end-user display apparatus.

36. (Original) The STB according to claim 22, wherein the content server is adapted to select and transmit advertisements targeted based upon a user profile stored in the subscriber database, wherein targeted advertisements comprise advertisements corresponding to at least one of a subscriber personal information, a

subscriber employment information, a subscriber channel viewing habits, and determined subscriber interests.

37. (Original) The STB according to claim 22, wherein the content server is adapted to transmit a message to the STB informing an end-user that a selected channel is unavailable for access due to one of unavailability of a requested channel from a satellite and unavailability of the requested channel due to the requested channel being restricted channel to select end-users.

38-63. (Cancelled)